

FEHD strives to crack down on sale of chilled or frozen meat disguised as fresh meat (with photo)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has all along been committed to combating the sale of chilled or frozen meat disguised as fresh meat. To enhance enforcement efficiency, the FEHD has launched a pilot enforcement operation codenamed "Pearl" in the Eastern and Sha Tin districts since late June. Targeting suspected cases of selling chilled or frozen meat as fresh meat for sale, inspections to licensed Fresh Provision Shops (FPSs) were stepped up, and corresponding follow-up actions were taken against other violations found during the inspections. After conducting in-depth investigations and gathering intelligence, the FEHD raided a licensed FPS in Sha Tin District suspected of selling frozen meat as fresh meat in a blitz operation today (August 9).

During the operation, FEHD officers raided a licensed FPS at Saddle Ridge Garden Arcade in Ma On Shan, and seized and immediately destroyed around 91 kilograms of suspected frozen pork. The licensee of the FPS concerned is suspected of breaching the licensing condition for the display and sale of frozen meat as fresh meat, and the FEHD is proceeding with the cancellation of the FPS's licence.

FEHD officers also initiated prosecution against the operator for dirtiness of the premises, while warning letter was issued to the operator for non-compliance with relevant licensing condition by failing to provide delivery notes for inspection.

The FEHD will strictly enforce the current policies to prevent FPSs whose licences have been cancelled due to violations resuming business at the same location using different identities. During the pilot enforcement operation, the department uncovered a case of suspected false declaration in a licence application using the aforementioned method and has rejected the related application. The department will scrutinise the relevant applications and, if any are found to involve suspected false declarations or other criminal offences, will consider referring them to the relevant law enforcement departments for handling.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Selling of chilled meat or frozen meat disguised as fresh meat breaches the licensing condition and causes food safety problems. Also, this profiteering practice is unfair to other shops that comply with the requirements."

The spokesman added, "Anyone selling chilled or frozen meat without permission commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment on conviction. The department will continue to conduct regular inspections at licensed FPSs and market meat stalls, and will actively handle complaints. In detecting any irregularities, the FEHD will

carry out immediate investigations and take appropriate enforcement action. In addition, the FEHD also proactively investigates suspected cases from time to time and conducts surprise inspections and enforcement actions as necessary. If there is sufficient evidence, prosecutions will be initiated and follow-up action will be taken on any breach of licensing conditions or tenancy agreements. The licences of those FPSs breaching licensing conditions may be cancelled, while the tenancies of market meat stalls breaching tenancy agreements may be terminated."

â€¢ The spokesman stressed that the FEHD is very concerned and has been committed to combating the sale of chilled or frozen meat disguised as fresh meat by taking stringent enforcement actions against the violations. For licence applicants who intend to evade regulations by making false declarations, the FEHD must handle such cases in accordance with the law.

